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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 09/26/06

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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, September 25

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
September 26, 2006

10:32:

Left Tokyo Prince Hotel Park Tower, where he is staying

10:50:

Met with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Futahashi at the Kantei, followed by Mitani, director of Cabinet Intelligence.

10:50:

Entered his name in the register book to pay his respects for the deceased Yutaka Egashira, grandfather of Crown Princess Masako, at the Crown Prince's Palace.

11:23:

Met with Futahashi at the Kantei, followed by Mitani.

12:03:

Discussion over lunch with Internal Affairs and Communications Minister Takenaka, Japan Post Corp. President Ikuta, and heads of the four companies to be launched following postal privatization.

14:42:

Met with former LDP Secretary General Takebe

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16:24:

Met with Nippon Keidanren Chairman Mitarai and others.

17:01:

Held last press conference as prime minister

18:10:

Arrived at Tokyo Prince Hotel Park Tower and stayed there overnight.

4) Prime Minister Koizumi holds last press conference: I endured the test fate thrust upon me

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
September 26, 2006

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi yesterday gave his last interview to reporters as prime minister at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). Looking back on the lonely battle he fought as the nation's leader, he noted: "I was under constant strain and pressure. I knew that fate had given me a challenge that I had to endure." Koizumi gave high marks to new LDP President Abe's selection of the line-up of the three Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) executives, saying: "The right people have been put in the right places. It is a well-considered line-up."

To a question about postal privatization, which left hard feelings in the party, Koizumi said: "While some may say that it was a ruthless policy, it is a compassionate measure for the people. People will understand that as time goes by." Regarding his visits to Yasukuni Shrine, which have strained relations with China and South Korea, he reiterated, "My visits will be understood later." During his tenure, the prime minister generally spoke with reporters twice a day. At the end of this press conference, Koizumi bowed, saying, "Thank you," and left the room.

5) Nippon Keidanren gives high marks to Koizumi reform: DPJ receives low marks

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 5) (Excerpts)  
September 26, 2006

The Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren) yesterday released its evaluation of the government policy in 2006, which will serve as a yardstick when its members donate funds to political parties. The business organization highly evaluated the Koizumi reform, by upgrading the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) efforts for tax and fiscal reforms to the "A" mark. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ = Minshuto) has received comparatively low scores with the exception of educational reform.

The 4th issue of the Keidanren policy evaluation focused on the period from the July 2005 general election, which was fought over

postal privatization, through this September -- the last year of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who is to step down today.

The report gave the highest mark to the fact that the government and the ruling camp worked together in mapping out spending cut measures in basic policy guidelines on economic and fiscal management and structural reforms for the fiscal 2006 national budget in order to get the 2011 primary balance right. Chairman Fujio Mitarai during yesterday's press conference stressed, "It was ground-breaking that the government and the ruling parties have come up with a policy that is painful to them as well."

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The LDP obtained the "A" mark in seven evaluation items, with marks for the consistency with Nippon Keidanren's policy revised upward in a number of items, including regulatory reform and trade policy. On the other hand, with the handling of key bills carried over to the next administration, scores for all items in terms of achievement remained unchanged.

The DPJ obtained no A marks, though gaps with the LDP have been narrowed through repeated policy dialogues, according to Deputy Chairman Kenji Miyahara. Gaps were visible between the DPJ and Nippon Keidanren regarding views on employment policy, in which the DPJ policy reflected the wishes of labor unions, and the energy and environment policy area, where the DPJ proposed an environment tax.

6) Abe cabinet to be launched today; Abduction, second chance ministers to be named; Aso to remain in cabinet

NIHON KEIZAI (Top play) (Full)  
September 26, 2006

Liberal Democratic Party President Shinzo Abe, 52, will be named the nation's 90th - 57th person - prime minister in plenary sessions of both chambers of the Diet in the extraordinary Diet session slated to open today. Abe will then soon begin determining a new lineup of cabinet ministers to launch his cabinet later in the day. Abe plans to establish a new cabinet post responsible for supporting the families of victims of kidnapped by North Korea, letting the chief cabinet secretary concurrently hold this post. He also intends to establish new cabinet posts by theme such as a second chance and innovation by reviewing the responsibilities of cabinet ministers in order to clarify the administration's objectives. In addition, Abe intends to increase the number of prime ministerial assistants as a means to enhance the functions of the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). Foreign Minister Taro Aso, 66, who came second after Abe in the LDP presidential election, is also certain to remain in the Abe cabinet.

Both chambers of the Diet will convene plenary sessions at 1:00 p.m. today to name the new prime minister. Given the LDP and the New Komeito's numerical dominance in both houses of the Diet, Abe is likely to be named the new prime minister around 2:00 p.m. The new Abe cabinet will be launched later in the day after going through an attestation ceremony at the Imperial Palace tonight.

Senior Vice Foreign Minister Yasuhisa Shiozaki, 55, of the Niwa-Koga faction, is likely to fill the post of chief cabinet secretary. New Komeito Representative Takenori Kanzaki recommended yesterday New Komeito Secretary General Tetsuzo Fuyushiba, 70, for a cabinet post. Abe accepted Kanzaki's recommendation for Fuyushiba. Coordination is underway to name Fuyushiba either the new internal affairs and communications minister, the economy, trade and industry minister, or the land, infrastructure and transport minister. Abe will give two cabinet posts to the Upper House LDP, as before. In addition, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Jinen Nagase, 62, of the Mori faction, is expected to join the new cabinet. Furthermore, former Labor and Welfare Minister Akira Amari, 57, of the Yamasaki faction, LDP Tax System Research Commission Chairman Hakuo Yanagisawa, 71, of the Niwa-Koga faction, and Treasury Bureau Director-General Yuji Yamamoto, 54, are expected to win cabinet posts.

7) Abe to set up public affairs assistant post to play up effort to

eliminate bureaucratic influence; Futahashi to be replaced

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
September 26, 2006

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) President Shinzo Abe has generally decided to increase the number of prime ministerial assistants from the present two to five and to install an assistant in charge of press affairs as his government launches today. Abe will replace Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Masahiro Futahashi in the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). He also plans to pick on his own the staff members of a Kantei Special Mission Office, which he will set up. These moves are aimed at playing up Abe's determination to make decisions under the leadership of Kantei, eliminating bureaucratic resistance.

Abe intends to appoint politicians to the five prime ministerial assistant posts in charge of press affairs, economic and fiscal policy, national security affairs, abduction issues, and education reform. The public affairs assistant would hold an afternoon press conference, taking one of the press briefings held twice a day -- one in the morning and the other in the afternoon -- now done by the chief cabinet secretary. He intends to position that assistant as "press officer" by revising the Cabinet Law at next year's ordinary Diet session.

About 80 bureau director-level officials have applied to the Kantei Special Mission Office staff posts. All the applicants have agreed that they will not return to their ministries and agencies as long as an Abe administration runs. The selection has already been completed. The appointments will be officially announced after a cabinet meeting today.

Futahashi was criticized for making remarks on behalf of the former Home Affairs Ministry (from which he came) in dealing the so-called trinity reform that would rearrange the taxation and fiscal relations between the central and local governments. By sacking Futahashi, Abe appears to be seeking check bureaucratic resistance against his new government, in addition to the reform of Kantei system. An administrative deputy chief cabinet secretary as a top bureaucrat will serve as a coordinator among the ministries and bureaucrats. Depending on who replaces Futahashi, there is a possibility that the administrative management of the new government will not go smoothly.

8) Abe administration to be launched today; Private-sector individual to be named deputy chief cabinet secretary for first time; Number of prime ministerial assistants to be increased to five

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
September 26, 2006

In launching his administration, Liberal Democratic Party President Shinzo Abe has decided to fill the post of deputy chief cabinet secretary for administrative affairs with a private-sector

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individual who has worked in the government. The deputy chief cabinet secretary for administrative affairs, the top bureaucratic post, has customarily been given to a person who has served as administrative vice minister of such ministries as the former Health and Welfare Ministry and the former Home Affairs Ministry. As a result, the administrative deputy chief cabinet secretary has a

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reputation for serving as a coordinator but not at coming up with innovative ideas in policy planning. Masahiro Futahashi, who has been serving as deputy chief cabinet secretary since September 2003, will resign.

Abe also plans to have five prime ministerial assistants - the maximum number under the Cabinet Law - to enhance the functions of

the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). One each will be responsible for economic and fiscal affairs, national security, the abduction issue, education reform, and public relations.

9) LDP President Abe decides to install four officials as administrative secretaries to prime minister

MAINICHI (Page 3) (Full)  
September 26, 2006

So Watanabe

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) President Shinzo Abe yesterday decided to appoint four officials - Minister's Secretariat Counselor Kazuho Tanaka of the Ministry of Finance (joined the ministry in 1979); Financial Affairs Division Director Hajime Hayashi of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (joined the ministry in 1982); Policy Planning Division Director Takaya Imai of the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy's Natural Resources and Fuel Department (joined the agency in 1982); and Foreign Affairs Division Director Shigeru Kitamura of the National Police Agency (joined the agency in 1980) - to the posts of administrative secretaries to the prime minister after assuming office as prime minister. As the secretary for political affairs to the prime minister, Yoshiyuki Inoue, who served as secretary to the chief cabinet secretary, has already been named.

10) LDP, Komeito hold ceremonial talks to continue coalition

ASAHI (Page 4) (Abridged)  
September 26, 2006

The two ruling coalition leaders, Liberal Democratic Party President Abe and New Komeito President Kanzaki, signed an agreement yesterday to maintain their parties' coalition ahead of Abe's launching of his cabinet. However, the agreement, as well as the New Komeito's new action plan, does not touch on anything about pending issues between the LDP and the New Komeito, such as amending the Constitution or establishing a national memorial for the war dead. It is obvious that Abe, who is conservative, and the New Komeito, which touts peace and welfare, differ. Even so, the LDP and the New Komeito first confirmed their intention to continue their coalition. It is clear that their coalition talks are ceremonial.

Main points from LDP-Komeito coalition accord

- Realize a small, efficient government
- Continue social security reforms
- Take measures to deal with the low birthrate and create a society in which people can receive second chances
- Proceed with decentralization
- Promote educational reform
- Ensure the safety and security of people's livelihoods
- Reinforce small business measures
- Restructure agriculture, forestry, and fisheries

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-- Push for peace diplomacy

11) Minshuto reelects Ozawa and party leadership; Diet affairs chief Watanabe replaced

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Abridged slightly)  
September 26, 2006

The main opposition Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) held its special convention yesterday afternoon at a Tokyo hotel and reelected Ichiro Ozawa, 64, as party president. His term will run for two years until the end of September 2008. Naoto Kan, Yukio Hatoyama, and Takeaki Matsumoto were also reappointed acting party president, secretary general, and policy research committee chairman, respectively. Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Kozo Watanabe, a focus of attention, became a supreme adviser, handing over his post to Yoshiaki Takagi. Katsuya Okada and others were informally named vice presidents. Ozawa's predecessor Seiji Maehara declined Ozawa's offer for a vice presidential post, however.

In a speech after winning the party endorsement, Ozawa expressed his determination to take over the reins of government, saying:

"The opposition camp must win a majority in next year's Upper House election to destroy the LDP administration. We will also win the next Lower House election and take over the reins of government. I am determined to spearhead this battle by staking my political experience and career on it."

Social Democratic Party head Mizuho Fukushima, People's New Party head Tamiyuki Watanuki, and New Party Nippon chief Yasuo Tanaka also attended the Minshuto convention as guests for the first time in three years.

12) Minshuto concerned about Ozawa's hospitalization

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
September 26, 2006

The Liberal Democratic Party announced the lineup of its top three executives yesterday. The same day, Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) held a special convention, in which President Ichiro Ozawa, 64, underscored the unity of opposition forces in a bid to take on incoming Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. However, his hospitalization for a checkup rekindled latent concerns about Ozawa's health. Although a senior party member said calmly, "His condition is not serious," Ozawa's second term as party president got off to a rocky start.

At 17:20, about two hours after the convention, House of Councillors member Keiko Itokazu, who will run with the backing of opposition parties in the Okinawa gubernatorial election in November, visited the hospital attached to Nippon Medical School in Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo, to see Ozawa. She met Ozawa for about 30 minutes. Minshuto Upper House member Shokichi Kina said after visiting the hospital with Itokazu: "He looked great. He's fine."

In a meeting of the Isshinkai, a group of junior party members supporting Ozawa, held at a Chinese restaurant in Tokyo last night, a message was sent from Ozawa noting: "Don't worry. I would like you to make more efforts to win the upcoming elections."

A junior member optimistically said: "If it were a serious illness,

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his hospitalization would not have been announced."

In the party convention yesterday, Ozawa seemed to be in good shape. He said in a speech, "Minshuto has only one goal, and that is to win the Upper House election and the next House of Representatives election." Just before the convention started, though, Ozawa said to Acting President Naoto Kan and Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama that he would go to the hospital after the convention. He told them, bowing his head: "I'm sorry this had to happen now."

A party source close to Ozawa said: "He was hospitalized 15 years ago (for heart problems), so he must have been worried."

In a press conference in May, Ozawa disclosed that he suffered from heart disease, saying: "I do not get down to work immediately after eating. Since breakfast or luncheon meetings are bad for my health, I have declined to attend such meetings." But after assuming the party presidency, he continued to be pressed with hard work, such as traveling across the nation to seek potential candidates for the Upper House election. When he visited Iwo Jima (Ogasawara Village, Tokyo) on Sept. 20 with Kan, he at one point took a rest while leaving a task to Kan. He must have been quite tired.

13) Japan-China vice foreign ministerial: Coordination underway to hold summit

MAINICHI (Page 3) (Full)  
September 26, 2006

Tomoko Onuki

The Japanese and Chinese governments yesterday held a comprehensive policy dialogue in Tokyo, following the one held on Sept. 23. Japan's Administrative Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi asked for an early resumption of summits between the two countries, which have been interrupted since last April, but Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai maintained a stance of ascertaining how Liberal Democratic Party President Abe will deal with the issue of visits to Yasukuni Shrine after assuming the post of prime minister. Coordination has run into difficulties. Both sides have decided to continue the dialogue today.

14) China urges Japanese prime minister to refrain from visiting Yasukuni Shrine"; Diplomatic bargaining underway for resumption of summit talks

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 1) (Full)  
September 26, 2006

The Chinese government had urged prime minister-designate Shinzo Abe to "make it clear he will refrain from visiting Yasukuni Shrine" as the condition for Beijing to accept "Prime Minister" Shinzo Abe's visit to China, as well as for the resumption of a summit meeting between Japan and China, sources revealed yesterday. Both Japan and China have agreed on the need to resume summit talks and improve the currently strained relations between the two countries because of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's repeated visits to Yasukuni Shrine. For that end, coordination between the two countries is underway through vice foreign ministerial talks and other contacts, but diplomatic horse-trading is continuing over the Yasukuni Shrine visit issue.

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A bilateral dialogue between vice foreign ministers on overall policies has continued in Tokyo since Sept. 23. The Japanese team regards it as an opportunity to coordinate the realization of Abe's visit to China, even before the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum slated for November.

In the resumed session yesterday, Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi repeatedly explained Abe's position this way: "What should not be done is to shut off every dialogue just because of the Yasukuni issue." But Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai urged Japan to further concede, noting, "We'd like Mr. Abe to 'set up the ladder'."

Specifically, the Chinese team called on Abe to turn around his current stance of not clearly stating whether he will visit the shrine or not and to state that he would refrain from visiting the shrine. China has stated it is wary about Abe's remarks about the "Murayama statement" (of regret for the war) and Class-A war criminals. In behind-the-scenes negotiations, Japanese officials told their Chinese counterparts that "Mr. Abe is unlikely to visit Yasukuni Shrine" by the time of its regular spring festival in next April, but they failed to convince the Chinese side.

15) Police to probe Kim Dae Jung case again

SANKEI (Top play) (Abridged)  
September 26, 2006

Japanese police authorities have decided to reinvestigate the case of former South Korean President Kim Dae Jung, who was kidnapped in Tokyo in 1973. The decision is based on the South Korean government's plan to shortly release its investigative committee's fact-finding report concluding that the incident was an organized crime involving the Korea Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) in those days, which is now the National Intelligence Service (NIS). Tokyo will ask Seoul to provide Japanese investigative authorities with records from the questioning of those who kidnapped Kim. The police will also look into the advisability of questioning them.

In February last year, the South Korean government's fact-finding committee set about looking into the Kim Dae Jung case. The committee questioned ex-KCIA officials. As a result, Kim Dong Un, who was a KCIA agent and was a first secretary at the South Korean



Embassy in Japan at the time, admitted to his involvement in the case. His fingerprints were discovered at the Hotel Grand Palace in Tokyo's Chiyoda Ward, the scene of the abduction. Another ex-KCIA official testified that he was ordered by KCIA Director Lee Hu Rak to abduct Kim Dae Jung.

The fact-finding committee concluded that the abduction was conducted by the KCIA, admitting the South Korean government's involvement. The committee will shortly release its report, according to officials.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department asked Secretary Kim to report. But the South Korean government rejected the request. The South Korean government did not indict him and did not even clarify whether he was a KCIA agent. Shortly thereafter, Seoul told Tokyo that South Korea had ended its investigation. The Japanese and South Korean governments have politically settled the case twice, first between Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka and South Korean Prime Minister Kim Jong Pil in November 1973 and then between Japanese

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Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa and South Korea Foreign Minister Kim Dong Jo in July 1975.

16) GSDF to conduct joint training exercises next month with US troops from Iraq

AKAHATA (Page 4) (Abridged)  
September 24, 2006

The Ground Self-Defense Force is planning joint training exercises with US forces in mid-October at its Sekiyama range in Niigata Prefecture and other locations. Those US troops participating in the joint training exercises took part in mopping-up operations that killed many citizens in Fallujah and other localities in Iraq, sources revealed yesterday.

The joint training exercises will be carried out with about 240 troops from the 2nd Infantry Battalion of the 162nd Infantry Regiment of the 41st Infantry Brigade of the Oregon Army National Guard. The battalion was deployed in Iraq for about one year until its return home in March 2005.

The battalion was ordered out in October 2003 and sent to Iraq after training in the United States, according to the March/April 2005 issue of the Oregon Sentinel, an organ paper of the Oregon National Guard, and the Oregon state government's press release. "During their deployment, the battalion's soldiers participated in important battles in Fallujah and Najaf," the sources say.

In addition, the battalion also joined security operations in Baghdad's Sadr City, where the sources say one of the hardest battles was fought in Iraq.

US forces conducted mopping-up operations in Fallujah, where they slaughtered a large number of innocent citizens. So they were condemned in the international community. Their combat operations in Najaf and Sadr City also victimized many citizens.

The joint training exercises will be conducted for 11 days from Oct. 16-26. Participating from Japan are about 350 GSDF members assigned to the 1st Airborne Brigade based in the city of Funabashi, Chiba Prefecture.

The 1st Airborne Brigade is one of the GSDF's crack units. It will be placed under the control of a central readiness command that is planned to be established within the current fiscal year for the GSDF's overseas deployment planning, training, and command.

The joint training exercises will be carried out by the Self-Defense Forces, which experienced deployment in Iraq, with US troops who engaged in actual hard-fought battles in Iraq.

SCHIEFFER